

International

A SURVEY OF BRITISH AND
WORLD AFFAIRS

**which way
for RSSF?**

WHY WE ARE MARCHING TARIQ ALI



RATIONALE OF THE
CZECH TRAGEDY

**Ernest
Mandel**

REVOLUTIONARY
OUTLOOK IN FRANCE

**Alain
Krivine**

1/6

letters

Tuesday 16th October 1968. The Nottingham based ANTI COLOUR BAR CAMPAIGN today referred a publication of the minor Public School, Trent College, Long Eaton, Nottingham, to the police and the Race Relations Board for prosecution in pursuance of the Race Relations Act.

This follows the publication in a school magazine of a poem described by Mrs. Margaret Gardner, the secretary of the campaign, as a "clear example of racial prejudice, calculated to inflame hatred for the coloured population amongst young readers." The campaign decided on this course of action after a copy of the publication was received by a supporter from the Senior English Master, Mr. Simon Bennett.

The ANTI COLOUR BAR CAMPAIGN has also written to the Department of Education and Science asking that the matter be investigated. Campaign chairman, West Indian George Powe, a former member of Long Eaton Town Council, stated "it is deplorable that a fee-paying school should allow this type of racist propaganda to go unchecked. Schools should be checking the growth of bigotry, not providing a platform for such outrageous views.

For further information please contact:
ANTI COLOUR BAR CAMPAIGN,
6, Rockford Road,
Basford,
Nottingham.

SOCIALIST MAGAZINE VICTIMISED IN IRELAND

Many people in the present Proportional Representation referendum in Ireland have warned of the danger to democracy if PR is abolished. The following case would tend to reinforce this argument.

I am the editor of a small socialist monthly-the Irish Militant. This paper was originally an Irish emigrant publication, but has reached a stage where, although still printed in London (by t.u. labour) over 80% of our sales are in Ireland. We are a frankly partisan socialist paper. As a part of our campaign against Fianna Fail's attack on the few remaining democratic liberties which Irish workers enjoy, the Irish Militant has, over the past three years, consistently warned the Labour movement of Fianna Fail's intentions to abolish PR. Last month we produced a special two page edition on the PR referendum, at a nominal price of one penny. This issue was printed on the 20th September 1968 and posted the next day to our distributors in fourteen centres in Ireland.

To this date this issue has only arrived at four of these distribution centres. In one case, Dundalk, our agent has been informed by Custom officials that the paper had arrived but the copies would not be released until:

(A) A statement of origin is produced- this despite the fact that the publishers and printers names and addresses are clearly printed on the paper.

(B) A charge of no less than one shilling and two pence is paid per copy- even though the selling price per copy is only one penny.

If this is an example of Fianna Fail democracy now, what price liberty if they succeed in abolishing PR?

Jery Lawless,
22, Duncan Terrace,
London N.1.

LENIN AND THE BLACK POWER DISCUSSION

Several of your correspondents have seemed to suggest that there is something intrinsically non-marxist about giving support to the Black Power movement. These same writers, I am sure, would consider themselves disciples of Lenin.

It is, therefore, instructive to read what Lenin wrote on allied subjects. Volume ten of Lenin's Selected Works (a collection of his writings on the Third International) has several important articles touching on this kind of topic.

Lenin made it absolutely clear that marxists had to have a very sensitive approach to the feelings of oppressed peoples. At the end of his Draft Theses on the conditions of membership of the Third International there is a particularly clear statement on this. He also made it clear that in his opinion marxists should support the RIGHT of black Americans to call for a separate black state if this was their desire.

There is no doubt that Lenin would have supported INTERNATIONAL's stand on Black Power.

Likewise with Trotsky, as anyone reading the various pamphlets published by Merit Press on the position of American blacks will observe. It is, therefore, quite dishonest for opponents of Black Power to pretend that they are carrying on the marxist tradition.

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Editor: Mike Martin
Business Manager: Barbara Wilson
Reviews Editor: Julian Atkinson
Layout: Antonia Gorton

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Signed articles do not necessarily represent editorial opinion.

Why we are marching

Tariq Ali

The press tried to oppose the March 17th demonstration by a "conspiracy of silence" - this was an obvious failure. This time it is trying different tactics: a witch-hunt is being conducted against VSC by both the bourgeois press and the mass media. We are accused of trying to burn down the imperial war museum, of planning to seize key buildings, of trying to disrupt London's underground system, of trying to smuggle "Danny the Red" into the country, of arranging for plane-loads of students to be trained in Cuba in the art of insurrection, of making molotov-cocktails and other even more lurid schemes. Hardly a day has gone by without there being a report of some leaflet, anonymous telephone call or secret interview "revealing all".

Callaghan, surely the most hypocritical and reactionary Home Secretary even Labour has produced works hand-in-glove with the press whilst pretending that he is a liberal, anxious to preserve the right to demonstrate. His remarks on the Independent Television News were calculated to prepare public opinion for brutal attacks on "marauding political hooligans".

In this situation, the fact that this demonstration is going to be the largest ever reveals the phenomenal growth of political consciousness among militants throughout the country. Two facts show how the press campaign has failed: organisations have continued to join the October 27th Ad Hoc Committee (two recent, unexpected but welcome, additions were the Student Christian Movement and Slant, the left-catholic group) and the huge increase of support up and down the country. I can give personal testimony to the latter. In the last few weeks I have spoken at really big meetings in different parts of Britain (my "secret tour" as the DAILY TELEGRAPH described it - some of my "secret" meetings had audiences of over 1,000!). In towns like Bristol, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Oxford, Dundee, Newcastle, hundreds turned up to hear about the demonstration - two or three years ago we would have been lucky to get scores.

The attitude of the press has been deliberate. It has been an attempt to divide the movement by suggesting that there is a respectable element and a "lunatic fringe". Jim Callaghan tried this one too. This is totally ridiculous. As far as the war in Vietnam is concerned we are all on the "lunatic fringe" because we are ALL for the defence of the Americans and think it our business to demonstrate in favour of this.

The attitude of the police has been quite clear. From all available evidence it seems that they would like a confrontation at this stage. There is an odd right-wing theory which believes that ideas are like flowers and can be nipped in the bud. Hence the police preparations and the hysteria engendered by the press. We should also point out that when the VSC asked for Trafalgar



Square on October 27th it was told that the Square was booked by some boys' club. Now we learn that the breakaway sectarian Maoists have been allowed to book it. Could it be that some people in authority are welcoming the prospect of a tiny part of the demonstration going to Grosvenor Square to get massacred?

We have asked the police to stay away. If they try to nip this movement in the bud they will see the beginnings of a movement which will finally overwhelm them.

We are marching because for us the Vietnam war is a priority. Because Vietnam is the battlefield today in the fight against US imperialism (and, therefore, world capitalism). Solidarity with the NLF and the Vietnamese people is the duty of every revolutionary socialist.

We are marching on Vietnam but because the Vietnamese people are to the forefront in the fight against world reaction our march will be in support of every progressive movement in the world. That is why the demonstrators will carry slogans in support of the Cuban revolution, Black Power, guerilla movements and banners of Che and Trotsky.

While the war continues VSC will continue to organise bigger and bigger activities. The tendency in some circles to underplay the Vietnam war reveals a vulnerability to bourgeois ideology. Because the mass media has ignored the war in recent months it does not mean that the war has lessened in intensity. The bombing has continued; the suffering of the Vietnamese people continues. More relevant, the Vietnamese people have given an example to us all in refusing to succumb to the blandishments of the US aggressors at the Paris peace talks.

October 27th, whatever happens, will be a momentous day in the history of the British left. Those on the revolutionary left who participate will be the core of a new movement. (Those who stay away will be consigned to the proverbial dustbin of history). This movement is something new and very relevant for all left struggles: it combines principle with non-sectarianism. That is why the establishment fears it; that is why jealous "lefts" denounce it. But it will continue to grow until a revolutionary socialist movement strong enough to settle accounts with British imperialism emerges. That is why we are marching.

VIETNAM THE PRIORITY FOR THE LEFT *an examination of attitudes*

Pat Jordan

No discussion about the role of the left in relation to Vietnam can begin without putting the struggle of the Vietnamese people in the context of world revolution. I would argue that all the basic mistakes of the left in this country on Vietnam flow directly from its failure to do just that.

Vietnam has to be a priority for the left not just because of the suffering of the Vietnamese people but because of the decisive nature of the Vietnam struggle.

American imperialism has taken on the role of world policeman for reaction. It has striven to hold back the advance of the world-wide struggle for national liberation and social advance. Whilst not being able to decisively change the relationship of forces it has, nevertheless, had some success in that endeavour. The numerous coups in Africa, the overthrow of Sukarno and the slaughter of the Indonesian communists, the murder of Lumumba and the imposition of a stooge government in the Congo, the stamping out of any move towards social progress in Latin America after the Cuban revolution, etc., etc., all show the dangers of this American strategy. Unless decisively rebuffed it could have a serious retarding affect on the progress of world revolution.

Needless to say, apart from Cuba and to a certain extent, North Korea, none of the workers states has tried to meet this challenge with a counter-strategy.

However, the whole strategy of the Americans has come unstuck because of the magnificent struggle of the Vietnamese people. All the American "successes" are meaningless unless they manage to inflict defeat on the Vietnamese. On the other hand, if the Vietnamese win the whole system of alliances the Americans have built up will fall like a pack of cards. The world-wide revolution-ary process will receive a tremendous impulse.

Socialists in Britain have a vital stake in this process. Contrary to what the "socialism in one advanced country" theorists of various hues (from the social democrats to the ultra lefts) may think, the future of British socialism is tied up with the world struggle. It is inconceivable that any big advance in Britain can take place if the world trend is against revolution.

Thus support for the Vietnamese people (and all others struggling against imperialism) is of tremendous importance to British socialists. Just

now the Vietnam war is THE decisive struggle and this decisiveness reflects itself in the minds of men. That is why it is possible to get bigger demonstrations on the question of Vietnam than any other issue in countries like Britain, where no great internal struggles are taking place. That is why masses of young people in Britain and other countries are becoming socialists directly under the impact of the Vietnamese struggle against American imperialism. It is in this light that one has to view the trends and tendencies in the anti-Vietnam war movement in this country.

For nearly three years now, there has been a campaign in Britain based upon the principled stand of solidarity with the Vietnamese people. In the first months only a tiny group of people, with material aid from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, carried out propaganda for the ideas of the solidarity position. They were accused of being "warmongers" and "splitters" by the more sectarian of the supporters of traditional anti-war organisations, the BCPV, CND, etc., which stood firmly on the negotiations position. In fact, the British Council for Peace in Vietnam said in its founding document: we do not seek to apportion blame for the Vietnam war. No-one on the left would dare make such a statement these days!

Behind these peace movements stood the Communist Party, which fought against the idea of solidarity as part of its "peaceful co-existence" policy. The highlight of the CP's endeavours to stop the progress of the VSC was the attack made on that movement in COMMENT just a few weeks before the March 17th demonstration. Our predecessor THE WEEK answered this attack very effectively. But even more effective was the fact that hundreds, if not thousands, of CP and YCL members took part in that demonstration, ignoring the warning that it was all a Fourth International plot. Very suddenly the Communist Party changed its line and the YCL has been very active in the preparations for October 27th. This change of line fills us with great joy and we look forward to seeing members of the Communist Party breaking with other aspects of their stalinist past.

The solidarity argument won the day because of its moral superiority and because it appealed to the young people. Whilst there are still organisations which put the negotiations position it is universally recognised that the VSC has won the leadership of the Vietnam protest movement and that only demonstrations called on the solidarity line stand a chance of mobilising large numbers of people.

This is a very big change in the political clim-

ate and has all kinds of consequences. It should be clearly understood that this struggle was won in a sharp struggle of ideas; not only against the "soggy" negotiations position but against all kinds of sectarian arguments as well.

The first big struggle against "left" critics of the principled solidarity position took place in the preparations for the founding conference of VSC and culminated in the walk-out of the defeated maoist minority. The struggle was obscured by the maoists who tried to insist that the famous "four and five points" be written into the constitution of the VSC. They refused to accept that the VSC could show its solidarity with the Vietnamese people without committing itself entirely to the diplomacy of the Vietnamese leaders.

In a less direct way, this position amounted to a refurbished edition of the negotiations line. All the more because the four and five points were put forward in a particular situation. Once that situation changed, had the maoists won out the VSC would have had to change its position.

There is another aspect to the struggle with the maoists at the founding conference and in subsequent years which was covered over by this more basic struggle. It is an aspect which characterised all the disputes: namely that the maoists subordinated the interests of the Vietnamese revolution to their own sectarian interests. For them, the most important thing has always been to "expose" the revisionists, the trotskysts and other "hidden agents of imperialism". If this means busting up a united struggle for solidarity with the Vietnamese people, it is just too bad from their point of view.

This attitude was most clearly expressed by the Socialist Labour League during its brief but stormy honeymoon with the VSC. Here the issue was quite plain: was the united front character of the VSC to be subordinated to the need to "expose stalinism", or was the need to build the broadest possible movement on a solidarity position to be predominant? If one took the former view, one would use the VSC platform to attack the Communist Party over its policy on the docks. If one takes the latter view, one should confine one's criticisms of organisations to their position on Vietnam, when speaking from the VSC platform.

Of course, as is usual in such debates the VSC's position was distorted. No-one was demanding that the SLL abandon its sacred duty of warning the mass of the British workers about the dangers of stalinism, pabloism, state capitalism, etc., in the columns of its own papers. Today, the SLL has gone much further in its criticisms of the VSC and has adopted a much more rigid theoretical position: one can only help the revolution in Vietnam by building the revolutionary party (i.e., the Socialist Labour League) in Britain, according to them.

These arguments are comparatively easy to refute but they have re-appeared in much more subtle forms as the success of the VSC and Ad Hoc Committees it has initiated has grown. There is an easy explanation for this: very few groups or individuals on the marxist left can be so barefaced as to refuse to take part in the demonstrations. (The SLL has had to work very hard for years to accomplish that degree of sectarianism!) However, many groups and individuals, whilst

taking part in, and even working very hard for preparations for the demonstrations have not changed their basic theoretical positions.

It is very difficult for most groups and individuals to do this. Many of them are quite isolated in Britain and have to justify their separate existence in theoretical terms. They operate on the basis of "marxism (or trotskysm) in one country" and this fact alone has all kinds of consequences for them. It is the main reason why they tend to be sectarian on such questions as Black Power, Cuba, and the colonial revolution in general. Because they are cut off from exchanging experiences and working out a world strategy in an organic process they are confined to paying lip-service to internationalism in theoretical terms and latch-



ing on to struggles in other countries, the content of which they very often don't understand.

One of the arguments that has come to the fore recently has been that of making VSC a multi-issue campaign. I don't intend to repeat the arguments in Ernie Tate's article (see October issue) but just to remark in passing that this again is a symptom of a general tendency to subordinate the interests of the Vietnamese revolution to the needs of groups in this country.

A much more subtle argument is that the best way to win working class support for the VSC is to "link the issues". It is claimed that workers in this country are opposed to the VSC because it does not campaign on wages, housing, etc., and that, therefore, it is necessary for the VSC to CONCENTRATE on making a connection between the Vietnam war and the economic issues of the British working class.

No-one will deny that in our general propaganda we should point out that the policies of the Wilson Government boil down to a total rejection of the socialist road, and that the fight against

its support of American policy in Vietnam is part of a general fight against its capitalist policies.

This is not the question at all. The important point is: what is to be subordinate to what?

If we say to the British workers: join us in the fight against the Vietnam war because in this way you will be fighting against the Government's anti-working class policies without saying that they should be opposed to American aggression EVEN IF THIS HAD NO EFFECT ON THEIR WAGES AT ALL, we are making concessions. What is more, this type of thinking mis-judges British workers.

They are not, as the bourgeois press pictures them, entirely self-interested. The militants, and these are the ones we should be aiming to win for the solidarity campaign, will respond to a purely socialist argument. It is a hallmark of reformism to argue that it is always necessary to argue in "bread-and-butter" terms before one can win working class support.

We should be very clear on this point: we appeal to British workers to join us in the solidarity movement because they have the duty to support their fellow workers. Once we stray from this basic approach the way is open for adaption of our solidarity position to a variety of reformist lines.

The linking argument, if it becomes the dominant one, will change our priorities. Bit by bit, we would find that the VSC would have to move from concerning itself primarily with Vietnam to taking up particular aspects of the struggle of the fight against the wage freeze. Ideas and programmes have a logic of their own. That is why ideological struggle is so important for marxists and why wrong ideas have to be fought against long before their harmful effects are apparent.

Apart from these points, it is easy to fall into quite serious political and theoretical mistakes by pursuing the linking argument. It is not true to say that the wage freeze arises from the Vietnam war and leave it at that. Of course, the American Government has agreed to support the pound in exchange for British support on Vietnam

policy. Furthermore, the imposition of a wage freeze and incomes policy has been demanded by the international bankers as conditions for their huge loans. However, it must be said that the crisis of British capitalism would exist even if there were no Vietnam war. Quite possibly it would have a different form: maybe a deep recession. But it is absolutely clear that British capitalism would seek to impose the burden of this crisis on the backs of the British workers. The incomes policy is just a form of doing this, designed to facilitate the neo-capitalist rationalisation and modernisation of British capitalism.

It would be lying to the workers to tell them that if we succeed in ending British support for the Americans in Vietnam we will have struck a decisive blow against the incomes policy. France is opposed to American policy in Vietnam and yet is the classical land of the wage freeze and incomes policy.

Neither is it correct from a theoretical or practical point of view to say that "every blow against British capitalism through a strike or a rent demonstration is a blow in favour of the Vietnamese revolution." Life is much more complicated than that. Paradoxical as it may seem to those holding an extremely simplistic view of things, the granting of concessions by the ruling class, even after fierce class struggles, often leads to a strengthening of the system. Every partial struggle which does not succeed in making large numbers of revolutionaries will tend to strengthen capitalism in the absence of a revolutionary party.

The struggle for the solidarity position is a struggle for a revolutionary attitude. It makes revolutionaries. When a period of sharp struggle comes these revolutionaries will know what to do - the French experience shows this. Watering down the struggle for a revolutionary attitude by adaption to reformist moods will defeat this end.

We are confident that the tens of thousands of British youth now supporting the solidarity position in Britain will give good account of themselves in future class struggles in Britain.

CUBA & THE NEWSLETTER

As could have been reliably predicted, THE NEWSLETTER, organ of the sectarian Socialist Labour League, has chosen to use the support Castro gave to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia to justify its attitude towards Cuba.

The SLL's position on Cuba has been that it is a capitalist state led by a petit-bourgeois leadership, doing its best to hold back the tide of social revolution in Latin America. Whether it still subscribes to this is not clear: there has been no official "change of line", but recent writings in the NEWSLETTER have berated Castro for not having a marxist approach to the invasion of Czechoslovakia. It seems to us ludicrous to expect the petit-bourgeois leader of a capitalist state to have a marxist attitude anyway.

Be this as it may, the NEWSLETTER falls into the trap it is so fond of accusing others of: that of defining the class nature of a state by the political actions of its leaders.

Lenin, Trotsky and other marxists always held it was the duty of revolutionaries to solidarise themselves with those struggling against oppression regardless of the mistakes or wrong attitudes

of their leaders. The Cuban revolution is under seige by US imperialism. It is daily threatened by invasion (of special note is the argument by certain reactionary elements that the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia gave the green light to the American invasion of Cuba). The leaders of the Cuban revolution daily call for the extension of the revolution to Latin America. Their heroism, just ninety miles from the belly of the greatest imperialist power the world has ever known, is remarkable. We would be surprised to see many of their "left" critics in this country show the same fortitude.

The Cuban leaders have made many mistakes and will make more. The duty of socialists in Britain is to solidarise themselves with the Cuban revolution, criticise it where necessary, but never forget that they should do all in their power to help it resist the pressures on it which are the objective factors working for its bureaucratisation. This is a marxist attitude. The position of the SLL, motivated by factionalism alone, is a complete perversion of marxism. It has to be seen in the context of the SLL's other unprincipled attitudes (its support of the Red Guards whilst it was wooing certain socialist elements, for instance).

Postmortem on Blackpool

Charlie van Gelderen

There was a time, in the hey-day of Bevin, Williamson and Deakin, when the platform at Labour's Annual Conference could always rely on the block votes of the trade unions to save it from the wrath of the constituency parties. Those were the days when Harold Wilson used to top the polls in the constituency section, followed closely by Barbara Castle. Those were the days when even the redoubtable Herbert Morrison was defeated in the NEC elections and the special post of Deputy Leader had to be created to get him back on.

All that has changed. Under the impact of the anti-working class legislation introduced by Harold Wilson's Government, and with a new generation of leaders more responsive to the demands of the rank-and-file, the unions have shifted to the left. This same dismal record of the Labour Government has driven many active socialists either out of the Labour Party or into inactivity. As a result the delegates to conference from the constituency parties represent a more right-ward trend than of recent years. Disillusionment among former activists is another of the achievements of Harold Wilson and his fellow ministers.

The capitalist press has not hesitated to hail Blackpool 1968 as a triumph for Wilson. Did not Frank Cousins himself lead the standing ovation? But a triumph for what? The so-called "Mid-term Manifesto" was not only an apology for the Government's short-comings it was also a pledge that it would continue to under-pin the capitalist system for as far as can be seen into the future.

This same determination to link Labour Britain with the capitalist west was revealed in the NEC's determination to link condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia with a call for strengthening NATO. It is encouraging that nearly half the votes were against this.

Although the unions showed their determination to defeat the incomes policy, they did not show the same socialist zeal when it came to dealing with other social issues. The resolution on housing, calling for the nationalisation of building land and the building industry; which condemned rent rebate schemes (so beloved by many Labour controlled local authorities); urged the use of empty office blocks for housing and which rejected the Prices and Incomes Board report on council rents, should never have been defeated. This brings home the point that many of the union leaders oppose the Government's incomes legislation only because it threatens their own bureaucratic positions.

On the National Health services there now appears to be an open conflict between the Labour Party and the Labour Government. The platform accepted the resolution from the Socialist Medical Association affirming support for a free and democratic National Health Service. How will the Government square this with its introduction of prescription charges?

It won't of course. As far as Wilson is concerned, Annual Conference is now just an occasion when he can exercise his oratorical skills. Anti-Government resolutions help, in their way, to create a happy atmosphere and show how "democratic" we are. They don't have much effect on Government policy.

Wilson showed his real and utter contempt for Conference by flying off to meet Ian Smith in Gibraltar, almost immediately after he left Blackpool, despite the fact that a resolution was carried by 3,124,000 votes to 2,661,000 that the pledge of No Independence BEFORE Majority Rule (NIBMAR) was not negotiable. On board the "Fearless," Wilson showed that not only was he prepared to sell the 4 million black Rhodesians down the line but also his much ventilated principles to say nothing of the rank-and-file of the party he is supposed to lead. There can be no doubt that the so-called "entrenchment clauses" in the proposed Rhodesian constitution will have as little effect to safeguard the interests of the African majority as they did in the "South Africa Act" which handed power to the white minority in what is now the apartheid state of South Africa.

The false air of euphoria with which conference ended will evaporate and the few active members still left in the constituencies will have to grapple with the consequences as they prepare for the next elections. This Government and the present leadership of the party can only prepare the ground for a devastating defeat at the polls. It is all very well talking about the "virus of Powellism", but failing a militant, socialist lead from Labour, the dangerous demagoguery of Enoch Powell will undoubtedly attract many working class votes. It is time to wake up.



RELEASE OBI EGBUNA

We are pleased to see that TRIBUNE of October 18th carried an article on the case of Obi Egbuna and other black power militants who have been held without trial for an intolerable period. This article, and the well-thought arguments in it, should be used for a campaign to demand the release of our black power comrades. Whilst not agreeing with all the arguments in full, we must welcome this change of attitude by at least one section of the left. Will others who claim to be more "left" than Tribune follow suit?

The rationale of the

ERNEST

Tremendous confusion exists in relation to the social and economic conflicts which arose during the last fifteen years in the countries where capitalism has been abolished. Does "liberalisation" mean a return to capitalism? Is democratisation of political and social life identical with rehabilitation of the "profit motive"? Are "economic reforms" of the Liberman type opening the road to a bourgeois type of Western democracy or to "economic nationalism"?

The Czech tragedy has stressed this confusion. It has shown that all those political forces which try to approach these problems with essentially subjective criteria can only embroil themselves in inextricable contradictions. For the Russian leaders and their apologists, there was a danger of restoration of capitalism in Czechoslovakia, but this was NOT linked with the restoration of private property of the means of production or the reappearance of a capitalist class; on the contrary, these apologists explicitly refer to "state capitalism" which was on the point of arising in Czechoslovakia.

For the Chinese, capitalism has been restored in the same way both in the Soviet Union and in Czechoslovakia. It is linked, it would appear, with the reappearance of "profit" in the economic mechanism. But in Rumania, where "material incentives" and "profit" have been introduced at least to the same extent as in the Soviet Union, socialist Rumania will be fully supported by People's China.....

One has the impression that all these vulgar marxists are true pupils of Stalin at least in one respect: in liberally throwing around labels of "counter-revolution", "capitalism" and even "fascism" completely divorced from objective marxist criteria. A "capitalist" is not any more a representative of a given social class, defined by private ownership of the means of production and the laws of motion which Marx laid bare in "DAS KAPITAL". No, anybody who happens to disagree factionally with the given ruling circle of one's own country, and who dares voice publicly these disagreements becomes an archetypical.

Haven't we witnessed before the sad spectacle of the same Tito and the same Yugoslav communists being thrice rebaptized within ten years time: First heroes of socialist construction, then fascist capitalists, then again socialist leaders? Perhaps now they will again become lackeys of world imperialism? How can anybody pay the slightest credit to this kind of name-calling?

FOUR KEY PROBLEMS

The countries which have overthrown capitalism and which start upon the road of building a socialist society under unfavourable objective conditions - isolation in a part of the world characterised by too low a level of development of productive forces - are confronted with four key problems around which political tendencies have been differentiating themselves to a growing extent during the last years in nearly all of them: the problem of relations with imperialism and with an expanding international revolution; the problem of economic management; the problem of

social inequality; and the problem of socialist democracy on the political field. To understand what is happening to-day in the so-called "socialist" world, one has to start from the basic fact that these differentiations have not been coherent or convergent, but on the contrary contradictory and divergent.

A few examples will show what we mean. In Yugoslavia, tremendous steps forward have certainly been realised on the questions of workers management and there exists a degree of political freedom for the working class which is certainly greater than in all other socialist countries (although it is still far from being sufficient) On the contrary, its attitude to the expanding international revolution is frigid and opportunist to the roots (viz. its attitude towards the Cuban revolution, its relations with the pro-imperialist regimes in Latin America etc.) and there has been undoubtedly growing social inequality.

In China, the "cultural revolution" has implied a much more healthy attitude in favour of social equality and much more fervour for international revolution than in any other socialist country (viz. its attitude towards the French May 1968 events). But no step has been made towards workers management of industry, and there has been regression and not progress as for socialist democracy within the communist party and the working class.

This combination of "progressive" and "regressive" trends in practically every single socialist country during the last twelve years makes global judgment by simplified formulae impossible, - except at the price of deliberate suppression of part of the truth.

If political and diplomatic concessions to imperialism mean a return to capitalism, what about Rumania which has gone farther on that road than even Czechoslovakia? What about the Soviet Union itself during the Yalta-Potsdam honeymoon, and under the leadership of Stalin? If on the contrary, only the internal evolution is decisive, how can one explain that the Communist leader - Gomulka - successively was in prison under Stalin, as a "revisionist", approved of strikes under socialism when coming to power in October 1956, condemned the same strikes as "counter revolutionary" starting with 1959, and ended by condemning as a "revisionist traitor" (i.e. implicitly justifying imprisonment if not worse) of another communist party leader, Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia? Any global oversimplification can only lead to bewilderment under these circumstances.

The four questions which we have enumerated are not the result of arbitrary selection on our part; they all result from objective contradictions which face those societies in transition from capitalism to socialism which exist in today's world.

The Czech tragedy

MANDEL

The forces tending to overthrow imperialism and capitalism on an international scale exist and develop independently from the wishes of the leaders of this or that socialist country. The problem whether to misuse them or to try and suppress them for diplomatic purposes and power politics with imperialism, or whether to genuinely subordinate the interests of any single socialist country to the overall interests of world revolution, is an objective problem posed by Lenin as early as 1918.

The bureaucratic deformation of the workers state - also noted by Lenin during the first years of the Russian revolution - in the last analysis a result of the economic, social and cultural immaturity of conditions in relatively backward countries, can crystallise and ossify into new structures which prevent the mass of the workers from actually managing the economy of their countries (under all kinds of pretexts: necessary "centralisation"; necessary "one-man-leadership of the productive process"; lack of specialised "knowledge", etc.) But the more complex becomes the economy, the more numerous the working class and the higher its skill and cultural level, and the more bureaucratic management shows itself inefficient and leads to periodic declines in the rate of growth of the economy.

The contradiction between the socialised mode of production and the survivals of bourgeois norms of distribution (of bourgeois law, as Marx called it and Lenin repeated) is the main contradiction of the transition period between capitalism and socialism. And from this contradiction flows that the survival and strengthening of phenomena of market economy and money economy cannot but increase social inequality and lead to growing contradictions on the road of building socialism.

Finally, the system of one-party-dictatorship, which has never been codified by Lenin - not to speak of Marx or Engels - as the rule for the dictatorship of the proletariat, only makes apparent sense (in a monstrous way, it is true), if one postulates omniscience of that party leadership, or of the wise general secretary. Once one admits that the majority of the leading body of a Communist Party can be wrong, as historical experience has confirmed beyond all doubt, and as Mao Tse-tung himself explicitly recognises, then any political monopoly in the hands of a single restricted group of workers or workers' representatives becomes an objective source of inefficiency and irrationality in a country building socialism, an obstacle for rapidly overcoming inevitable errors and for rapidly correcting inevitable mistakes.

In the classic body of marxist thought - included in the body of leninism - these truths would have been considered as self-evident. But the communist leaders of the socialist countries of today are not products of that body of thought. They are products, all of them to various degrees of the stalinist deformation and falsification of

marxism, however much some of them try to reject their heritage.

What is involved here is not a simple question of ideological filiation. We are confronted with a social problem.

Marxism is the reflection of the historical interests of the working class. But the working class does not exercise direct power in any of the socialist countries (i.e. through democratically elected workers' councils - soviets - as described by Lenin's "State and Revolution"). Power is in the hands of leading strata, more or less materially privileged as a result of its political monopoly of power. And all the spokesmen of the various tendencies which have arisen from the decomposition of international stalinism retain a similar fear of letting the working class directly exercise political power (for the most naive and the most cynical of them, such workers' power would probably be a perfect proof of...the restoration of capitalism!).

Pressurised by the growing objective social and economic contradictions of their society; submitted to conflicting influences of conflicting social layers, they oscillate from one "reform" to another, combining "liberalism" here with "left-wing deviations" and "adventurism" there. As long as the umbilical cord is not cut with the bureaucratic privileges, both of political power and of material income, re-identification with the working class is impossible, and a convergent solution of the above-named contradictions in a marxist sense likewise unattainable.

THE RATIONALE OF THE CZECH TRAGEDY

It is in the framework of these elements that one can understand the basic traits of the Czech tragedy.

Of all the socialist countries, Czechoslovakia is the most developed industrially, with the possible exception of the German Democratic Republic - its working class has overwhelming social weight, its Communist Party real historical roots in that working class. Under the Novotny regime, all contradictions were stretched to the breaking point. The economy was in an impasse; production stagnated and even started to decline. Technology, once among the most advanced, became increasingly backward. Discontent was nearly universal. CP leaders became divorced from the nation.

Under pressure of these contradictions, a movement of economic reforms started. It imitated essentially a similar movement initiated in the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland; growing autonomy of the enterprises; partial rehabilitation of the "profit motive"; growing exchanges with the Western countries (on that field, Rumania, not to speak of Yugoslavia, have gone much further than Dubcek's Czechoslovakia). The Russian leaders did not fear that movement, because they had given the example themselves. As for diplomatic compromises with imperialism, surely Khrushchov and Tito had gone much further than Dubcek.

Given the social structure of Czechoslovakia, this reform movement in the beginning was not

very popular. The workers feared the technocrats as much as they had despised the "political" bureaucrats. They didn't like the prospect of increasing inequality. They were worried about the risks of unemployment and rising prices.

But economic "liberalisation" is inconceivable without a certain amount of freedom of discussion. And here the social reality of Czechoslovakia came back upon the new CP leaders, and especially upon the Russians, with a vengeance! It was not uninformed and crude products of neostalinism who started to discuss. Thousands of old communists, who had gone through the school of classical marxism-leninism, participated in that discussion. Classical forms of socialist democracy were rediscovered, proposed, fought for. The struggle to abolish censorship and to realise inner-party democracy in leninist terms was launched. This movement slowly percolated towards the factories. The working class became politically interested and more active. And when the Russian pressure became stronger, it rallied

massively around the issue of national self-determination, and the struggle to defend its right to determine its own road towards socialism.

Of these developments, the Russian, Polish, East-German leaders were mortally afraid. Not because they thought this would lead towards a "restoration of capitalism" - in fact, in no other Eastern European country the popular support for socialism was so large as it was in Czechoslovakia since January 1968. But because they feared that these examples might trigger off movements questioning the bureaucratic monopoly of power in their own countries. What is involved in the Czech tragedy is not the question of defending or threatening the socialised infra-structure of society. What is involved here is the threat to the political monopoly of the bureaucracy, the threat to the specific superstructure which these societies still show in varying degrees. The crude subjectivism of the argumentation is only a faithful reflection of the crude particularism of the social interests defended.

What do we want from the RSSF conference

Peter Gowan

(Chairman Birmingham University Socialist Society)

As the November conference of RSSF approaches it is becoming clear that many important questions concerning the student movement and our tasks within it will not be fully examined, let alone answered over the weekend of November 8th-10th. It is therefore necessary for those of us who wish RSSF to establish itself as the vanguard organisation of the student movement to try to ensure that the conference concentrates on the most essential problems.

We must face the fact that no revolutionary organisation can live on conferences alone. It must develop a successful revolutionary "PRAXIS" which deepens its roots in the mass and drives it forward to higher levels of political struggle. And yet in Britain socialist student activity at the NATIONAL level has been centred almost entirely on conferences of one kind or another. NALSO saw itself as the student section of the organised labour movement and accepted the established channels of communication inside that movement; therefore it was never more alive than when voting on resolutions at its annual conferences.

Its ideas were revolutionary enough perhaps but it wasn't a revolutionary ORGANISATION, because it lacked any revolutionary practice. NALSO as a national body was simply a forum for debating the problems which concerned the local socialist societies. RSA has also failed to show any revolutionary potential. The explanation for this most often heard is that its leaders were reformist or stalinist or both. This is at best only part of the explanation and it betrays a paralysing idealism on the part of those who put it forward. For the basic reason for the death of RSA as a national organisation has been its failure to involve the student mass in meaningful collective action - meaningful both in the sense of touching the actual grievances felt by students and in the sense of demonstrating an effect-

ive form of struggle. In other words, like NALSO, RSA has lacked any kind of revolutionary practice: it has lived only in the world of ideas, only at conferences - its own or those of NUS.

It became evident at the RSSF conference in the summer that the new organisation is in danger of succumbing to this old disability. Some comrades seem to harbour the belief that to be revolutionary simply means to hold and expound revolutionary ideas. Others, less deluded and more numerous, are aware that revolutionary politics is nothing if not political action but can envisage such action only at the local level: for them the function of a national organisation became that simply of a channel of communication for the exchange of ideas and experiences. This may be a tenable view in the present situation but if we accept it we must be aware of its implications for RSSF as a national organisation: RSSF then becomes a club for revolutionaries, a centre of debate, and not a revolutionary organisation. In other words to accept such a view is to wish for nothing more than a revival of NALSO under a new name. If this perspective is adopted in November a crucial opportunity will have been lost.

A third tendency was evident at the LSE conference: those comrades who recognised the need for action on a national scale, the need for RSSF to establish itself as a national political force but who would seem content to leave the working out of such plans of action to an executive body elected by the conference. If previous experience of such student executives is any guide, it would seem probable that the energy and resourcefulness required of such an executive would be more than it could be expected to possess. That being the case RSSF would very rapidly degenerate into a scene of sterile denunciations of the leadership such as has been such a marked feature of student politics in the past.

Thus, those of us who wish to see RSSF as a

genuinely revolutionary organisation of British students should try to ensure that the November conference focuses attention on the central problem of developing a revolutionary practice. But we must go further than simply winning the conference's approval for the principle of such a perspective: we must try to commit RSSF to a specific plan of action, a particular campaign which it can develop during the months after the conference.

There would seem to be at least three criteria for judging the efficacy of such plans:

- 1) the demands they make on the resources available to RSSF.
- 2) the degree to which they exploit the specific opportunities open to RSSF in the present situation.
- 3) the degree to which they raise the level of consciousness of the mass and open the way for a broader and stronger assault on the bastions of the British ruling class.

1. At the present time, the membership of RSSF is almost entirely confined to students, and university students at that. Secondly, while the revolutionary left is undoubtedly the most politically energetic section of university students, it is in most cases far from occupying a position of hegemony within the student community. Thirdly there is great variation in the struggle of the left from one university to another. Acceptance of these limitations means recognition of the fact that any NATIONAL action on the part of RSSF must be limited to the universities and must have the aim of initiating student action on one particular issue which confronts ALL university students. (This does NOT mean, of course, that the work of LOCAL RSSF branches should be limited to the university campus). Further, the work required of both the membership and the leadership should correspond to their level of commitment and of political development and with the resources of time and money available to RSSF.

2. Any campaign must be grounded on the specific grievances felt by students in their daily lives. The forms of action which RSSF opens up for students must take account of both the general level of consciousness and of the wide variations in mood from one university to another at any given time. Only then will students begin to see the need for, and relevance of, RSSF.

3. The issue, or issues, on which RSSF chooses to act should be ones which will tend to throw up other questions in the minds of students and which will lead them forward to their demands which the ruling class will be unable to meet. Further, there is much evidence that the most explosive sectors of the educational system in Britain may at present lie outside the universities, in other areas of higher education and perhaps in the secondary schools. It is therefore very important that the actions of RSSF should be orientated to rapidly broadening its base outside the universities.

This may be a useful framework for beginning the urgent task of working out in the most concrete detail a campaign that could win acceptance at the November conference. I will finally suggest one possible campaign - national action against the examination system: RSSF could call for a national stoppage for one day in the spring term in all universities, a day in which students could discuss the question of examinations and how to abolish them. Local RSSF branches could

set up ad hoc committees to prepare for the day-long strike against the exams. The central organisation of RSSF could prepare literature and produce posters and arrange for speakers to tour the country building up support at local meetings. The advantages of such a campaign would be the explosiveness of the exam issue amongst students, the appeal of the campaign beyond the universities and the possibility of running it at a level which would be within the capacities of RSSF.

There will have to be exhaustive discussions on each proposed campaign for the next period in the life of RSSF. What this paper seeks to establish is that the central concern of the November conference should be with developing a plan of action at a national level. The questions of programme and organisation cannot be given any final form at this stage. A programme can be put together as the movement develops. The nature of the organisation set up in November should depend on the tasks RSSF sets itself. The most fundamental of these tasks is the development of revolutionary political action.

TWO ON FRANCE

Amongst the predictable spate of publications about last spring's crisis in France, two new books: FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1968 by Maureen Conville and Patrick Seale (OBSERVER correspondents); and REVOLT IN FRANCE, a contemporary record of compilation from the American MILITANT and INTERCONTINENTAL PRESS are happily characterised by their exhaustive and accurate research.

Neither book is deeply analytical; however both point out the general lessons of May-June: primarily the counter-revolutionary role of the French Communist Party, and the background to the student revolutionary movement, which eventually led to the largest strike in one country throughout all history, and the greatest revolutionary movement in post-war Western Europe.

The Penguin is of special interest because of its research into the "Groupuscules", which were to play such a vital organising role during the crisis. The role of the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (JCR), the youth organisation associated with the Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI), which supports the United Secretariat of the Fourth International is given special prominence. The JCR is described, as "...the most formidable pressure group on the extreme left."

The history of the revolution is traced back to the development of the Comité Vietnam National (CVN), which has been enormously successful in radicalising and mobilising huge numbers of youth. The development of the idea of Student Power, around specific issues of student demands is examined at length.

REVOLT IN FRANCE has an excellent interview with Alain Krivine, a leader of the JCR. It has a wealth of day-to-day documentary material which gives one a real feel of events.

* See advert elsewhere in this issue.

No-one who is interested in studying these events in France can afford to miss these two books.

* FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1968, Penguin 6/-.
Rod McVeigh



women in class society

ANN TORODE

In a class society, based as it is on the private ownership of the means of production, women's status is necessarily low. Engels points out:

"The division of labour between the two sexes is determined by causes entirely different from those that determine the status of women in society." (Origin of the Family).

Thus, in primitive societies, where the property was held in common, the major division of labour was between the women, bearing children, cooking, spinning and working in the field, and the men who hunted for food. The bearing of children, necessitating such a division of work, did not entail the subjection of women.

On the contrary; in the earlier 'group family' and the later 'pairing family' (to use Engels' terms), women were very much respected precisely because it was they that had the children. In such a society there was no reason for the paternity of the mother's children to be established; maternity alone was certain. Descent was reckoned through the female line. The only ownership was in the necessary implements for living - hunting and cooking equipment, etc, and these items usually reverted back to the gens of the deceased. In the case of the mother her children could inherit from her, being of her gens.

It was the development of private property in the means of wealth that brought about the crucial change. If it was the men that were the hunters of cattle, it was they who later moved to herding them. As their wealth in cattle and slaves (captured enemies who looked after the herds) grew, "it on the one hand gave the man a more important status in the family than the woman, and on the other hand created a stimulus to utilise the strengthened position in order to overthrow the traditional order of inheritance in favour of his children." and this was "The world-historic defeat of the female sex." (Engels)

From the previously free pairing marriages there developed male dominated marriages - monogamy. The woman had to become a breeder of her husband's children - and no-one else! She became the property of her man, in much the same way as his cattle were. Virginity was her burden before marriage and chastity ever after, (any examination of the divorce laws of this country up until as recently as 1923 exemplify this; a woman who committed adultery could be divorced, but for a wife to get a divorce she had to prove cruelty as well). The fiction of marital unity is still operative, although in 1885 the wife

was given rights over her own person and by 1925 wives could be treated as individual persons in property transactions. Similar examples could be found in the marriage laws of most lands.

If Engels is correct in linking women's status with the existence of private ownership of the means of production, then it puts the whole issue of women's rights and abilities in a different perspective. It may be today that anthropologists could argue that Engels' account does not take into account this detail or that it is simplistic, but, to my knowledge, there is no better hypothesis for the development of monogamy.)

So, for socialists to argue that woman's status is decided by her role, productive or not, and that since the industrial revolution she has developed a low status as factory production has taken over many of her functions is as much of a mystification of the real relations as it is for journalists, etc., to say that it is her "illogicality" and more emotional approach that prevents her from fully participating in the "logical" male world.

This basic inequality, traceable to the very roots of class society, can be justified by societies' theorists who analyse and understand social relations as they exist in society, not as they develop. Women, thus, are unequal because they are not equal.

Psychologists talk about "man the actor"; men are outward looking, actively involved in the world - this is their nature. Woman's nature, however, is more bound up with her body, her glandular variations. She finds fulfilment in motherhood; she operates on a more intuitive basic level. It could only be in a male dominated society that Freud could discover not that men suffered from envy of the females' child-bearing, creature capacities, but that women suffered from "penis envy" and "castration complexes"!

The religions glorify monogamy and motherhood with their morality of "chastity" and "purity", the "sanctity of marriage" and the family - the ideal which finds its expression in the Virgin Mary myth. (Actually the Church is none too clear on this. St. Paul and his ilk regarded women as the personification of evil and the "flesh", designed to tempt the ascetic from his path - a sentiment only too obvious in the old form of marriage service).

At a time when the Pill and educational opportunity are presenting women with more freedom both to limit their families and to seek interesting work, the sociologists come along to explain to those mothers who'd like to work outside the home the importance of the mother in the 'socialisation' process - especially in the first five years. A theory refined by the concept of 'maternal deprivation' - that the child will be a

delinquent if he does not have a secure relationship ALL the time with his mother. (The research for this was carried out amongst orphans in a large clinically run institution - not amongst the children of working mothers where findings of researchers show that they actually do not suffer at all if adequate alternative provisions have been made).

The various ideological justification for women's secondary status serve as a continuous reinforcement of that status, especially as many of them are accepted by women themselves - often with pride - her femininity, her special relationships with children and her thought and bodily processes so different from those of men bestow on her a uniqueness which affects her relationships with both sexes.

But accepted by women or not, all such arguments can only serve to disguise the real relationship.

The inequality of women stems from the monogamous marriage system - born not of the free desire of two people to live together - but of the need to subjugate woman and deny her desires in the interests of the inheritance of private property. It also ensures that children are brought up within their own class with all the limitations that that may place upon them.

To bring about a radical change in the status of women, the whole notion of family organisation in society would have to be changed. It has long been recognised that the prevailing ideology about the home and family bears little relationship to the actual family. The Hammonds' books, "The Town Labourer 1760-1832" and "The Village Labourer 1760-1832" paint a grim picture of the conditions of life at the time of the industrial revolution. Especially for the cottage women who took in work mainly spinning, for the developing factories. They had to work all the hours of the day, feeding opium to their children to keep them quiet. The middle class Victorian women, better off in many ways, was still a very frustrated being - sexually and intellectually. She was part of her husband's property and useless except as an example of his wealth. The overcrowding, the slums and poverty in London in the 1930's has well been documented in "Metropolitan Man" by Robert Sinclair. He shows what a travesty overcrowding, with its concomitant incest, made of the ideals of family life. But the family as an institution has its weaknesses even in the epitome of all a family should be - the white, middle-class American household, with its limited well-fed children and all its modern equipment as Betty Freidan in her book "The Feminine Mystique" concluded. She points to the complete frustration of the "dream life" in her house - the alcoholism; the drug-taking and the neuroses. The only "fulfilled" women she found on one particular estate were all working in interesting careers.

We must not confuse women's role as mother with the monogamous marriage system and the restrictions of family life. It is obvious that women are the biological mothers - they have the babies - and as such they should demand full rights over their own body, including free, immediate abortion, access to free contraceptives, and as Leonora Lloyd says in her article on "Women as Mothers"*, research into congenital abnormalities. It does not follow logically from this biological fact that each mother will have to look after her own infants in her own home for ten years or so. This is a social question, not a biological one.

The image of the little woman in the home is so pervasive, that even when mothers go out to work, their job is considered to be secondary to the children's needs - a factor which does not apply equally to the father. Women have two roles, the sociologists tell us, and furthermore, these roles are conflicting. If she stays at home she is a "cabbage" - if she gets a job, she is depriving her infants. It is true of course. In our society women are faced with these conflicts.

It is our job as socialists not to demand retraining schemes for women after ten years of housebound motherhood. The only way to "upgrade" their job as mothers is to abolish fulltime motherhood. It is only when children are seen as the responsibility of society and not the sole responsibility of the individual parents; when creches are provided for all children, from the age of three months onwards at the place of work; when canteens provide meals communally (which naturally does not rule out family cooking as required); when time off is provided for having babies without consequent loss of seniority - and perhaps most importantly, when women are involved as people in building a society - only then will women be freed, both as second class citizens and as workers. A sense of the possibilities of this freedom can be seen in Felix Greene's moving book "The Wall Has Two Sides", where he describes the effect of the Chinese revolution on the women.

The question is, can any, or all, of these demands be met in a capitalist system? It is possible under capitalism to have a system of creches to enable the women to work - if the employers need the labour as they did in wartime Britain - but women would always have to face the possibility that in times of recession they would be the first to go (suddenly the sociologists would discover that healthy children need their mother at home).

Even supposing that women had equal pay, conditions and promotion possibilities, both men and women as workers face the problem of the nature of work in capitalist society. In such a system, the worker does not see himself as being involved in building a society by his productive effort. Women are not going to free themselves simply by escaping from the home in order to work for an employer and his profits.

* See INTERNATIONAL Vol. 1, Number 5.

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POST

Revolutionary perspectives in France BY Alain Krivine

(The following article has been translated from ROUGE (Red), a "journal of Communist Action", appearing in Paris.

According to LE MONDE, the 12-page newspaper, which appears twice a month, has a circulation of about 25,000 copies.

"It was founded", according to LE MONDE, "by a group of militants who took an active part in the May events, particularly those who belonged to the former Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire, a movement dissolved by the decree of June 13. Its aim, according to those publishing it, is "to rally the layer of militants who mobilised in May to the left of the Communist Party" in order "to create a revolutionary organisation."

A subscription to ROUGE costs 25 francs a year (37/6), and it is distributed in Britain by Pioneer Book Service of 8, Toynbee St., London E1 - individual copies may be bought for 1/10 p.p.

The author, Alain Krivine, a leader of the former Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire, was released from prison, where he had been held by the de Gaulle regime in reprisal for his outstanding role in the May-June events, only to be drafted almost immediately into the Army. Trial on the trumped-up charge is still pending.)

Throughout the summer, the right-wing press, getting its tips from the Government, waged a systematic witch-hunt campaign. The grouplets are everywhere, the JCR (Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire) above all. Practising the nefarious tactic of "entrism", it is inlating itself everywhere; the CP (Communist Party), the mass organisations, and the vacation camps in Corsica are infiltrated. FRANCE-SOIR, PARIS-PRESSE, MINUTE, every paper is preoccupied with its plotting. Not to mention the CVN (Comite National Vietnam-National Vietnam Committee) camp in Cuba where 500 youth were being trained in the use of arms to the great indignation of Baume!.

This campaign has a purpose - "to make repression a recognised, self-justifying feature of society, to create a climate of all-embracing repression against the conspirators. Because the bourgeoisie was afraid in May, it felt its power tottering. Before May, it was unaware of the vanguard groups or it underestimated them. Now it overestimates them; it sees their hand in everything.

But from one standpoint, if it overestimates their present strength, it is not overestimating the potential danger they represent as a force which threatens the machinery of integration into bourgeois society and which rejects the parliamentary dialogue by which the bourgeois government and the bureaucracy communicate smoothly. For the bourgeoisie, repression is a rational need, which on this occasion has taken on a fury that is a measure of the fears, the humiliations, and the powerlessness it experienced in May.

Some are trying now to distinguish "tendencies" in the government-a liberal tendency represented

by Edgar Faure and a "cop" tendency represented by Marcellin*. In fact, the policies of these two differ only in their assessment of the balance of forces. Edgar Faure understands that starting in with fists clenched could set off a resurgence of the student mobilisation of May. Offering his hand first, he hopes that the reformists, or the "serious students", who see "participation" (a demagogic Gaullist slogan pledging involvement of the students and workers in running the country) as a continuation of May, will take it. Once the "incorrigible wildmen" are isolated, Edgar-the-liberal will turn over the reins to Marcellin-the-club; it's a scientific division of labour.

As for us, while we try to exploit any margin of manoeuvre offered by divisions of this sort, we consider that all revolutionists worthy of the name are constantly menaced by bourgeois society because they are constantly in conflict with it. It is fine to take full advantage of periods of legality but there should be no illusions about their durability. They are truces, not a normal situation to get used to. This legality will last only as long as no one threatens the established order. The respectable left, including the CP, is trying to obliterate this lesson. But we must revive the consciousness of the temporary nature of this situation.

We must prepare ourselves for repression but not by turning inward, by practising an ostrich-like policy. To the contrary, in OPPOSITION TO THE OFFICIAL REPRESSION of the police, vanguard militants must arouse MASS RESPONSE, broadening the movement. IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRO-GOVERNMENT REPRESSION of the secret police and the CDR's (Comites de Defence de la Republique-Committees for the Defence of the Republic-Gaullist and fascist bands) they must develop mass SELF-DEFENCE.

The economic situation of French capitalism will not be catastrophic in the coming months. The buying power inherited from May is stimulating demand. And since the capitalists took advantage of the aborted crisis to make their readjustments, a period of economic expansion is in the offing for the immediate future.

But the effect of price increases for such things as cigarettes, railway fares, gas, electricity, food can be out of proportion to their real economic importance. The workers went back to work in perplexity after May, disillusioned but not crushed. Naturally they are not ready for a general strike every two months. But they realise that the bourgeoisie is trying to take back what it had to concede through a speed-up and price increases, and they feel swindled and cheated. Since the wage increases were proportionally larger for low-wage workers than for the well-paid, there may be sharp struggles in sectors like chemicals or metals.

In this connection, the student movement's capacity to block the government's policy in the universities is important. Of course, I do not think that the student movement can play the role of

detonator as it did in May. However, the vanguard workers—those who hope for a "revolutionary resurgence" since the "republican resurgence" Waldeck Rochet called for in the elections did not come off-will keep their eyes on the movement which was out in front in May: the student movement.

If the students accept Edgar Faure's "participation," if instead of deepening the concessions they won in May they capitulate to the repression, that would be a blow to the movement as a whole, a blow to the morale of the workers. But if the students block the government's plans for the new school year, reject a return to the old order and preserve the spirit of May, that would give new hope to the movement as a whole.

The student movement's first task is to **BEAT THE GOVERNMENT ON THE UNIVERSITY FRONT**, and the success of this depends partly on us.

But the students must not stay on the campuses; they must explain the meaning of their struggle in the neighbourhoods and the factories. They must show that the workers and students are in the fight together against "participation." They must expose the other face of "participation." **THEY MUST SUPPORT AND PUBLICISE ALL STRUGGLES OPENED UP BY THE WORKING CLASS.**

After May the students cannot any longer go out to fight alone; that would mean trapping the movement in the same impotence. The first task of the moment is to **RALLY THE EXISTING WORKERS VANGUARD**, which appeared in May both inside and outside the unions and the CP. With the Czechoslovak crisis aggravating the post-election malaise of the CP, it is possible today through attractive slogans and a militant style to draw together the nucleus of a workers vanguard. The arena of this regroupment must be the Action Committees and the workers committees where the most conscious workers are coming in search of something different from a rehash of the CGT's economic themes, where they hope to find political underpinnings for their activity.

This slow, patient, stubborn work is the fundamental task. But parallel to this, we must counter all the attempts by the Government, the reactionaries, and apolitical types to organise the youth in movements such as the *Mouvements Universitaires pour la Reforme* (University Reform Movements) and the *Conseil Etudiant de France* (Student Council of France) and the *Union pour la Coordination des Etudiants en Medecine* (Medical Students Coordinating Committee). Against these attempts we must **CREATE A VAST REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY AND HIGH-SCHOOL YOUTH** based on the *Comites d'Action Lyceens* (High-School Action Committees), the *Comites d'Action Enseignement Technique* (Technical High-School Committees), *UNEF* (Union Nationale des Etudiants Français - French National Student Union), and the student Action Committees. The best guarantee against any danger of a fascist development is to organise the youth.

To set long-term perspectives, it is also necessary to develop the means for carrying them through, for keeping them from being diverted, for imposing them by a favourable balance of forces. In order to achieve this, the vanguard must be strengthened, educated, and rid of its organisational opportunism and its petit-bourgeois habits which are bound up as much with its field of work as its particular social origins. But these faults cannot be eliminated simply by willing it ment-



ally. Only more varied social composition, increased recruitment in working class strata, and the diversification of areas of work can achieve this.

The goal this vanguard must set itself is to formulate transitional slogans, to bring the transitional programme up to date. Such slogans were cruelly lacking in May. The only thing the militants knew how to do was repeat the list of CGT demands in a differing order or to reaffirm their fidelity to socialism. While the Action Committees or factory strike committees created embryonic organs of dual power and broke down the old barrier between trade-union action and political action, the militants remained imprisoned in the framework inherited from social democracy and stalinism, going from the minimum programme to the maximum programme and vice versa, **WITHOUT HITTING ON TRANSITIONAL DEMANDS WHICH WOULD EDUCATE THE MASSES AND MEET THEIR ASPIRATIONS.**

The militants above all must not turn inward in the work of developing this transitional programme. For the themes selected to have any value, the masses must identify with them, become imbued with them, make them theirs. To accomplish this, the vanguard militants must set in motion a vast programme of research into the concrete conditions of the exploitation of the workers, promote collective formulation of slogans, and urge that they be tested in practice. This work must be done so that at the next crisis, enriched by this preparatory work, the spontaneity of the masses will be on a still higher level than it was in May.

* Appointed Minister of the Interior on May 30.

for your bookshelf

REPORT FROM IRON MOUNTAIN

There has already been a great deal of speculation as to who wrote "Report from Iron Mountain or the Possibility and desirability of Peace". (Now published by Penguin 4/-) Is it a genuine report from a United States Government Commission or has it been written by Leonard C. Lewin who provides the introductory material? Fascinating as such a discussion may be the document, authentic or not, has its own merits as a study of the warfare state.

The necessity for heavy military spending for the stabilisation of the capitalist economy has already been stressed by many bourgeois and marxist economists to varying degrees. The report looks at various suggested substitutes such as space research programmes or an enormous social welfare scheme. This latter would make available for all the housing standards enjoyed by the top 15% of the American population. It would abolish poverty and develop and protect water supplies, forests, parks, etc. Alas, such a gigantic scheme would only stabilise the economy for ten years at the most, after which it would have achieved its aims.

Where the report goes further than most bourgeois analyses is its perception of some of the other aspects of the military system. Many points thus touched on come as no surprise to marxists - the following might almost come from "State and Revolution" - "The basic authority of a modern state over its people resides in its war powers... On a day to day basis it is represented by the institution of the police, armed organisations charged expressly with 'internal enemies' in a military manner."

Other points display the kind of logic which has made experts like Herman Kahn so well known. Thus modern wars are improving since their killing is more indiscriminate. Previously when the strongest and most able bodied went to war and got killed wars were genetically regressive.

The attempts to work out some substitutes for the non-economic functions of war bring even more bizarre solutions. The war system controls potential enemies of society - the substitute suggested is the reintroduction of slavery. The first step towards this would be the adoption of some form of universal military service.

The logic of the Report ultimately derives from its starting point of the compatibility of the war and peace systems with the stability and survival of American society. Whether it is authentic or not it goes a long way in revealing the bankruptcy of the bourgeois order in America.

BRIAN DAVEY

Revolution in the Havana Green Belt

Trevor Croft

These days the people of Havana are hard at work on a project in line with the trend toward freeing the Cuban capital of its agricultural dependence on other provinces. The goal, self-sufficiency in food supplies for Havana is to be implemented through the newly created Havana Green Belt.

The Green Belt includes approximately 30,000 hectares of land. Of this about 20,000 hectares have been allocated to citrus fruit tree interplanted with coffee. These crops are protected from hurricanes by wind-breaks of sturdy trees such as tamarind, which itself bears an edible fruit, much used as a flavouring for drinks, ice-cream and sweets.

With its fine soil and total absence of frost there is no reason to doubt Fidel when he says that Havana province will have a citrus fruit production greater than that of the State of Florida, USA.

So far, 40 million coffee plants have been planted in the Green Belt alone. Coffee was first introduced into Cuba via Haiti around 1748. By 1833, it reached a production of 641,589 cwt. But the collapse of the slave system and the tariff war between Spain and the United States in 1848 brought about the ruin of the Cuban coffee industry.

Now the Revolution is planting coffee, this time under incomparably superior conditions from a point of view of quality, technique, and variety. The Havana province alone has now outstripped Mexico, planting eight times the annual amount of that country. During October and November twenty to thirty million more coffee seedlings will be planted. This means that Havana province will even have a surplus to export.

Huge plant nurseries, rabbit breeding farms (for skin and meat) a cattle insemination centre, said to be one of the world's most modern, dairies, botanical gardens and even a zoo are quickly changing the face of outer Havana.

A total of eighty reservoirs will be constructed in the Green Belt. Many of these are at present under construction. Large scale irrigation will make possible bumper crops of vegetables, sugar cane, rice and gandul beans. The planting of the latter was begun as a salute to the victorious Tet offensive of the PLAF of South Vietnam. The first gandul seeds were sown by the DRV ambassador and the head of the NLF mission.

All this is the work of thousands of Habaneros who have been carrying out a systematic invasion of the Havana province countryside in a giant effort to transform unproductive land into productive areas.

The Pinez voluntary mass-scale incorporation of the people into agricultural work is an example of the high degree of revolutionary awareness the Cubans possess. Pressure and material incentives are not needed to advance the revolution. Taking up hoes, picks, shovels, and planting bags the agricultural army fights to overcome underdevelopment.